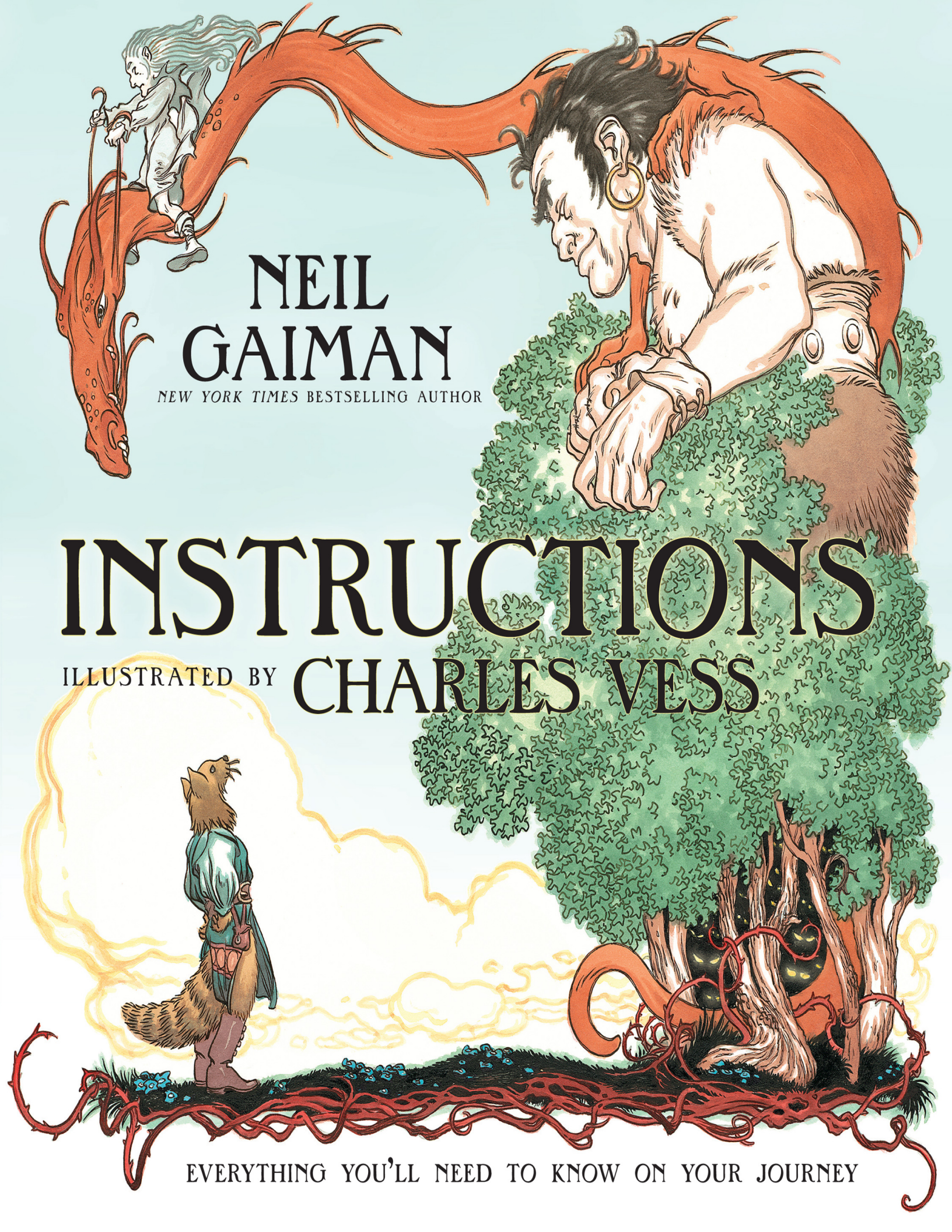
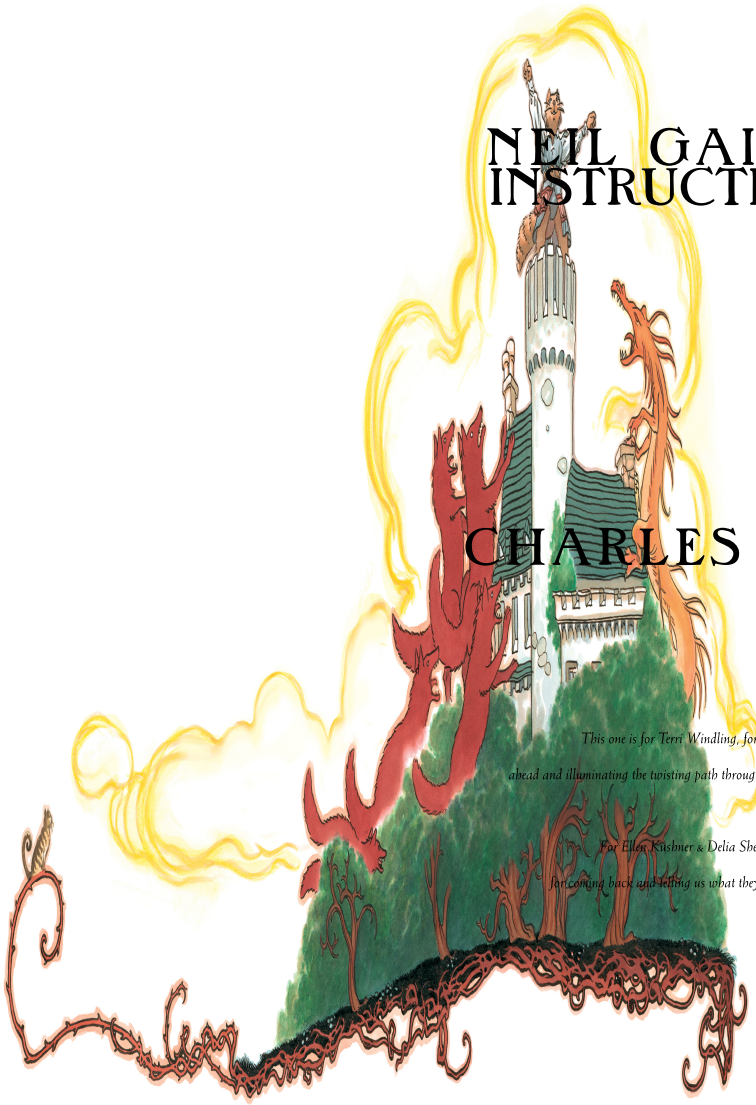

NEIL
GAIMAN
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
INSTRUCTIONS
ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES VESS
EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED TO KNOW ON YOUR JOURNEY

NEIL GAIMAN
INSTRUCTIONS



CHARLES VESS

This one is for Terri Windling, for going on

ahead and illuminating the twisting path through the wild wood. —CV

For Ellen Kushner & Delia Sherman,

for coming back and telling us what they found. —NG

HARPER

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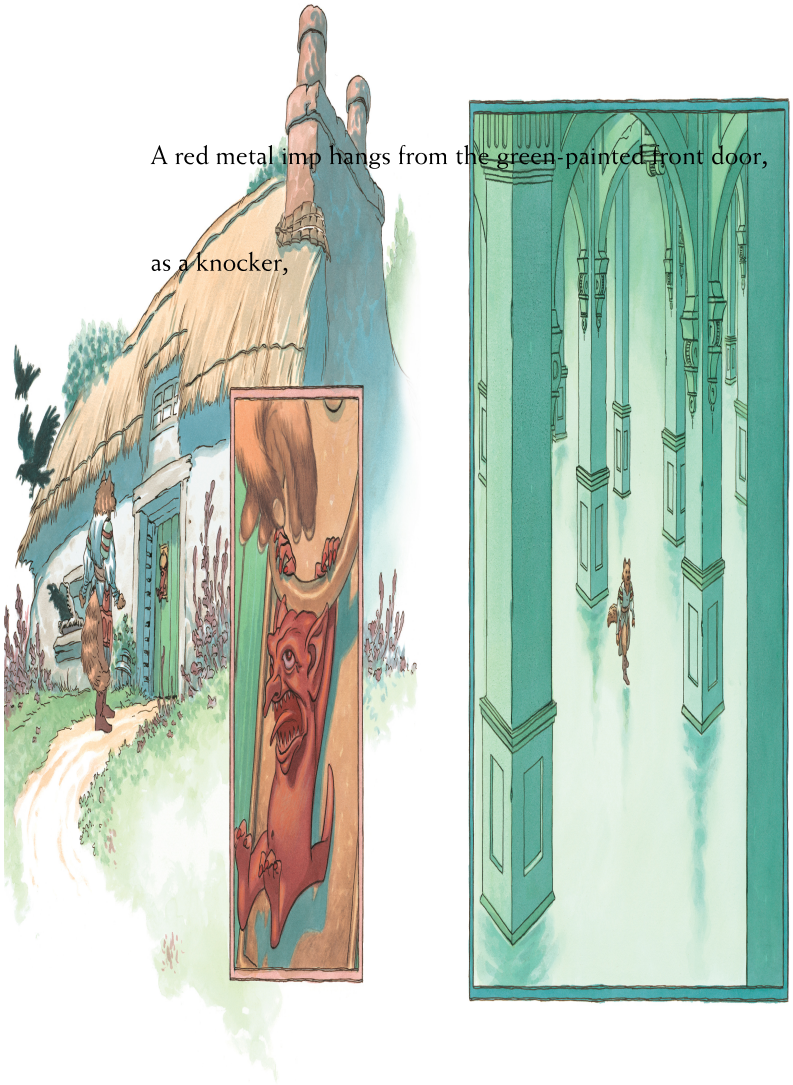
Touch the wooden gate in the wall you never saw before,

Say “please” before you open the latch,

go through,

walk down the path.



A red metal imp hangs from the green-painted front door,

as a knocker,

do not touch it; it will bite your fingers.

Walk through the house.

Take nothing.

Eat nothing.

However,

if any creature tells you that it hungers,

feed it.

If it tells you that it is dirty,

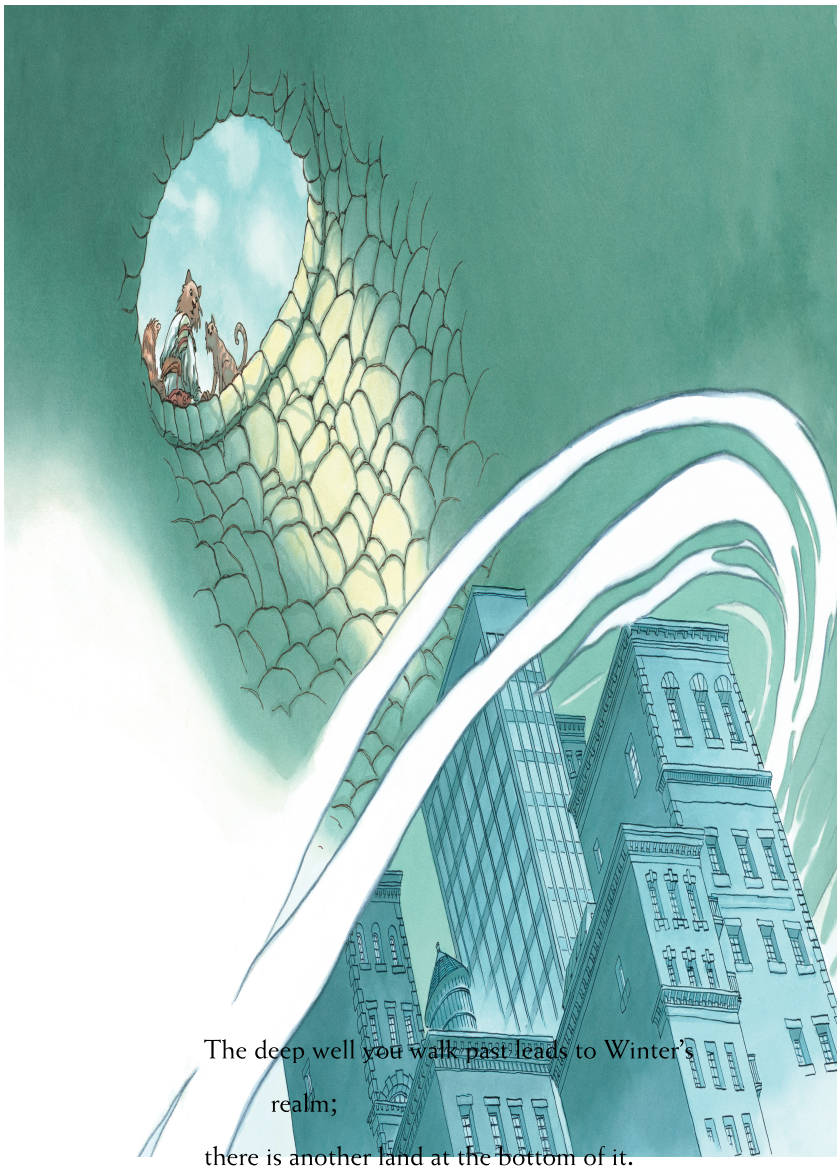
clean it.

If it cries to you that it hurts,

if you can,

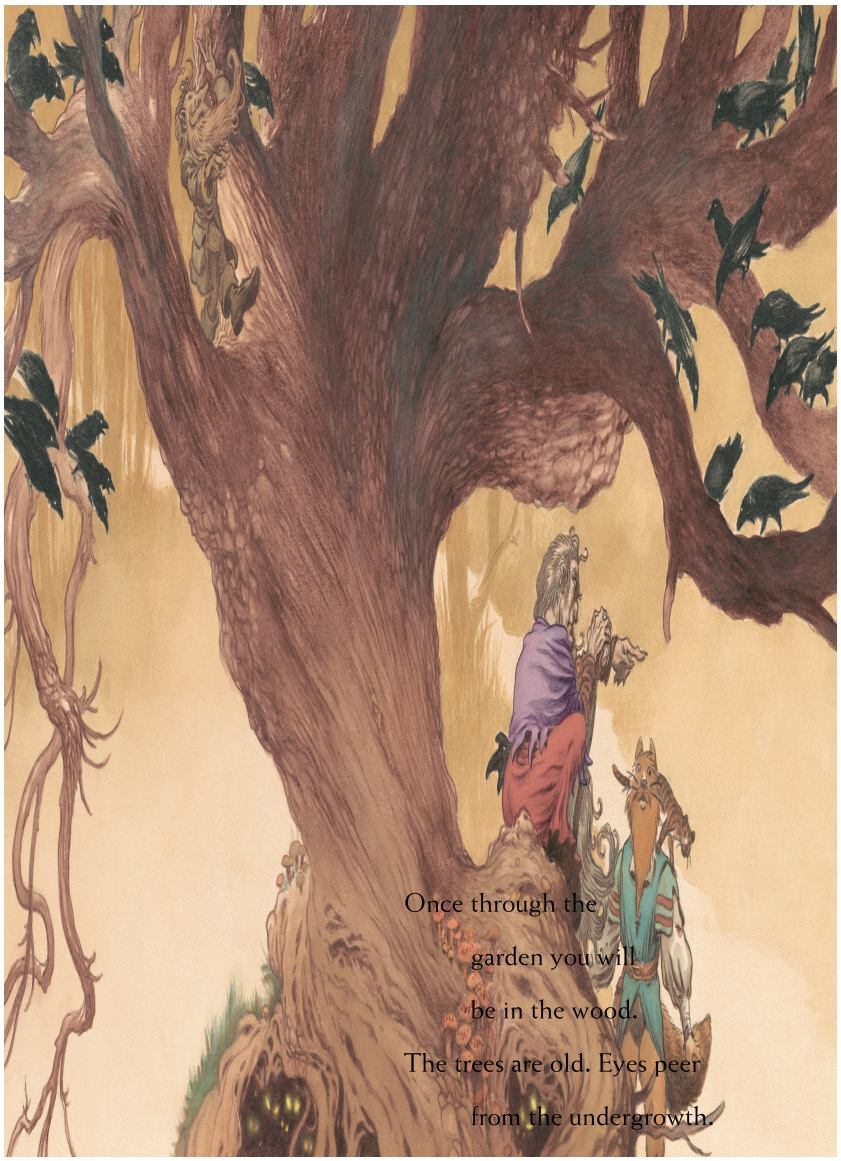
ease its pain.

From the back garden you will be able to see the wild wood.

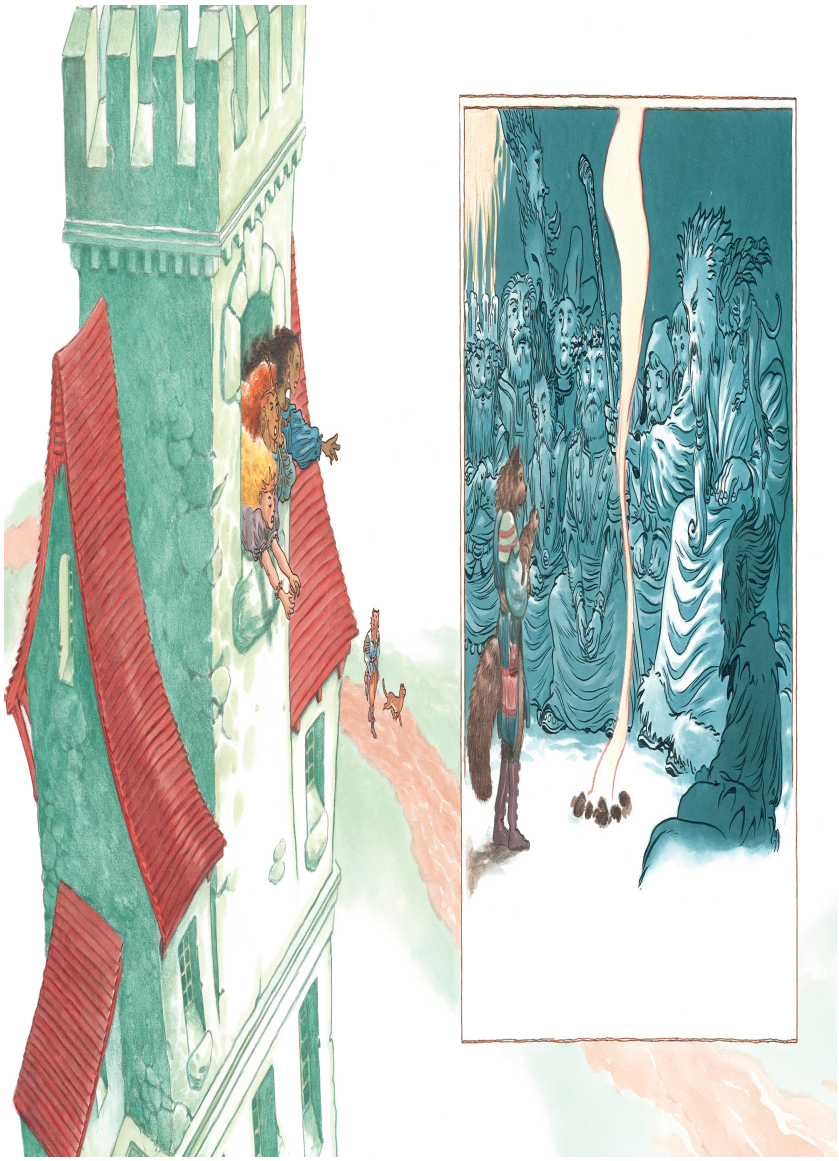


The deep well you walk past leads to Winter's
realm;
there is another land at the bottom of it.
If you turn around here,
you can walk back safely;
you will lose no face.

I will think no less of you.


Once through the
garden you will
be in the wood.
The trees are old. Eyes peer
from the undergrowth.

Beneath a twisted oa
sits an old wo
She may ask f
something;
give it to her. She
will point the way t
the castle.



Inside it

three pr

Do not

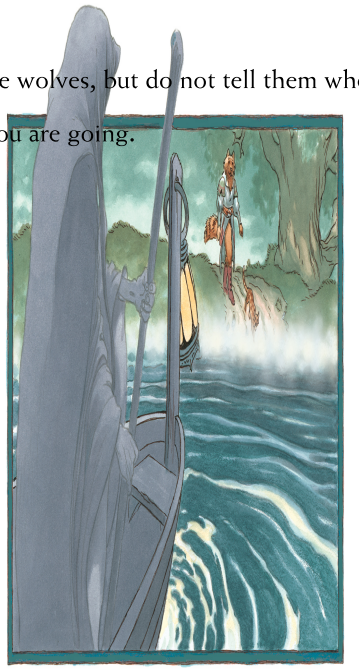
the you

Walk or

In the clearing beyond the castle the twelve months sit about a fire,
warming their feet, exchanging tales.
They may do favors for you, if you are polite.

You may pick strawberries in December's frost.

Trust the wolves, but do not tell them where you are going.



The river can be crossed by the ferry.

The ferryman will take you.

(The answer to his question is this:

If he hands the oar to his passenger,

he will be free to leave the boat.

Only tell him this from a safe distance.)

If an eagle

gives you a feather,

keep it safe.

Remember:

that giants sleep too soundly;

that witches are often betrayed by their appetites;

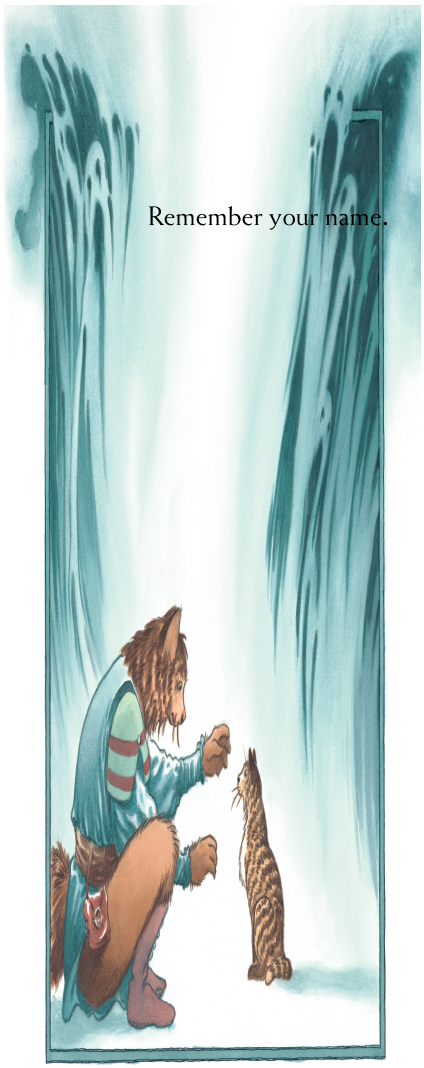
dragons have one soft spot,

somewhere, always;

hearts can be well-hidden,

and you betray them with your tongue.

Do not be jealous of your sister;
know that diamonds and roses
are as uncomfortable when they tumble from
one's lips as toads and frogs:
colder, too, and sharper, and they cut.



Do not lose hope—

what you seek will

be found.

Trust ghosts.

Trust those that

you have helped to

help you in their turn.

Trust dreams.

Trust your heart,

and trust

your

story.

When you come back,
return the way you came.
Favors will be returned,
debts will be repaid.

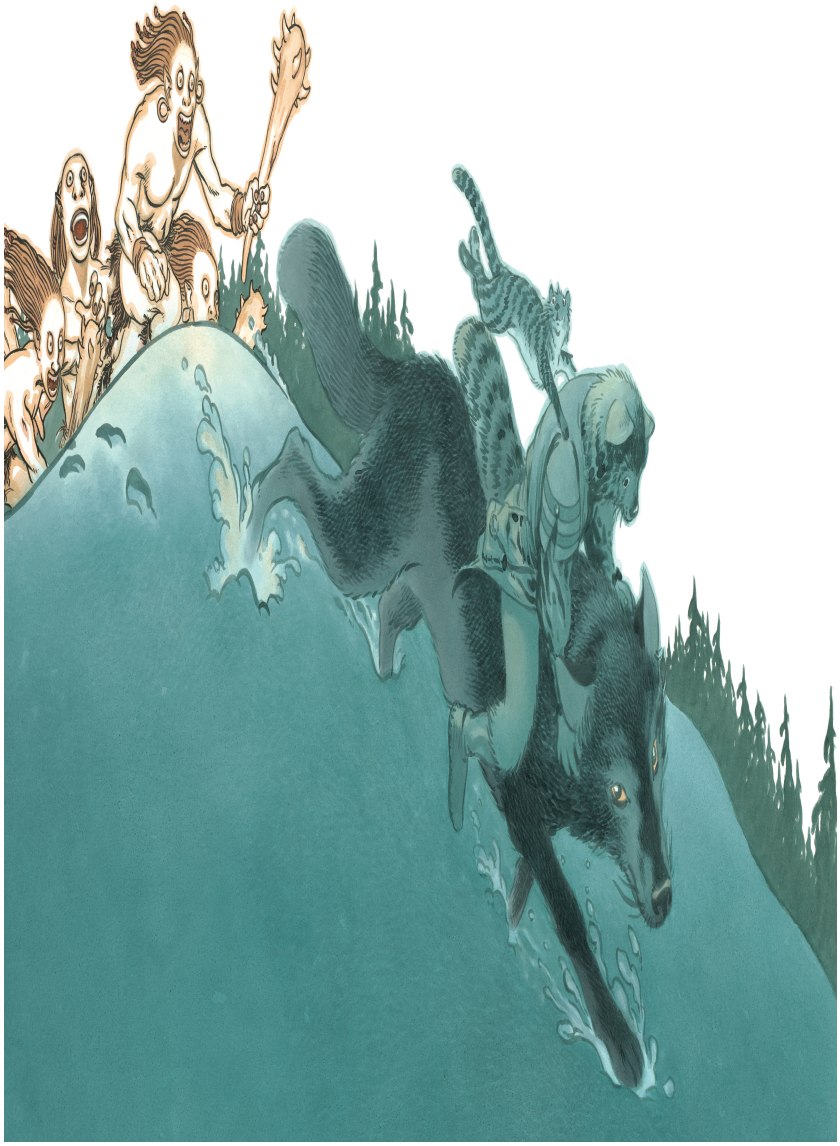
Do not forget your manners.

Do not look back.

Ride the wise eagle

(you shall not fall).

Ride the silver fish
(you will not drown).



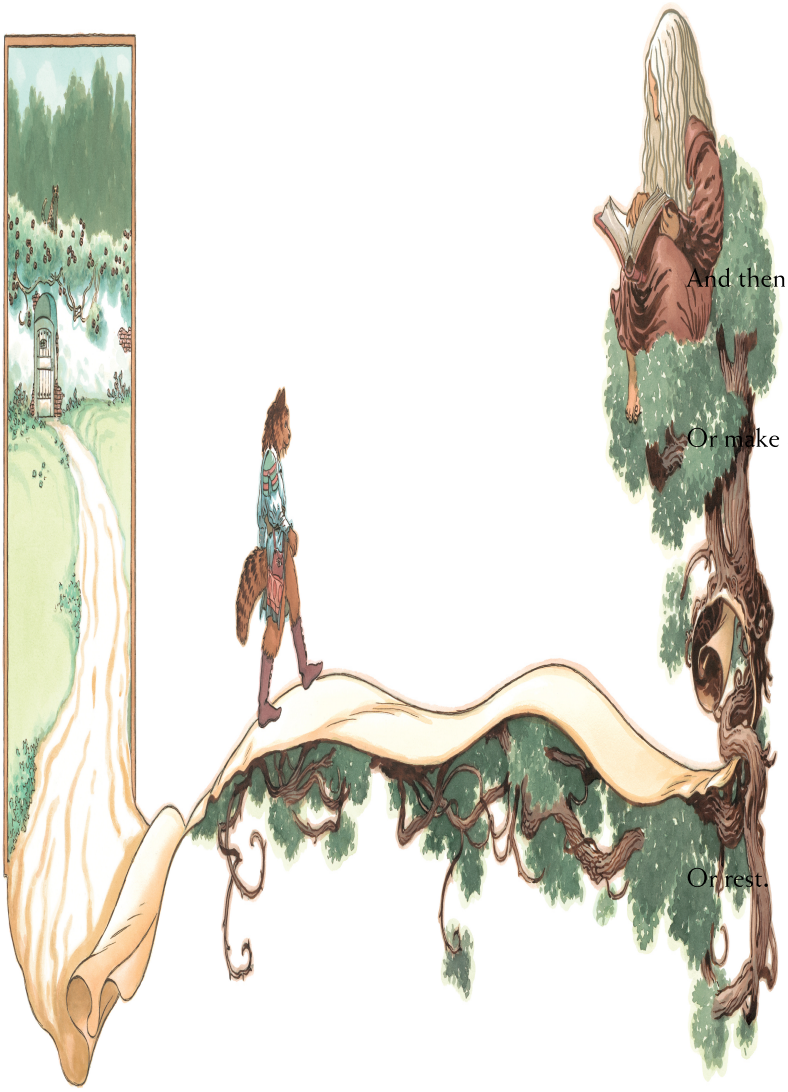
Ride the grey wolf

(hold tightly to his fur).

There is a worm at the heart of the tower;

that is why it will not stand.

When you reach the little house,
the place your journey started,
you will recognize it, although it will seem
much smaller than you remember.
Walk up the path, and through the garden
gate you never saw before but once.



And then go home.

Or make a home.

Or rest.

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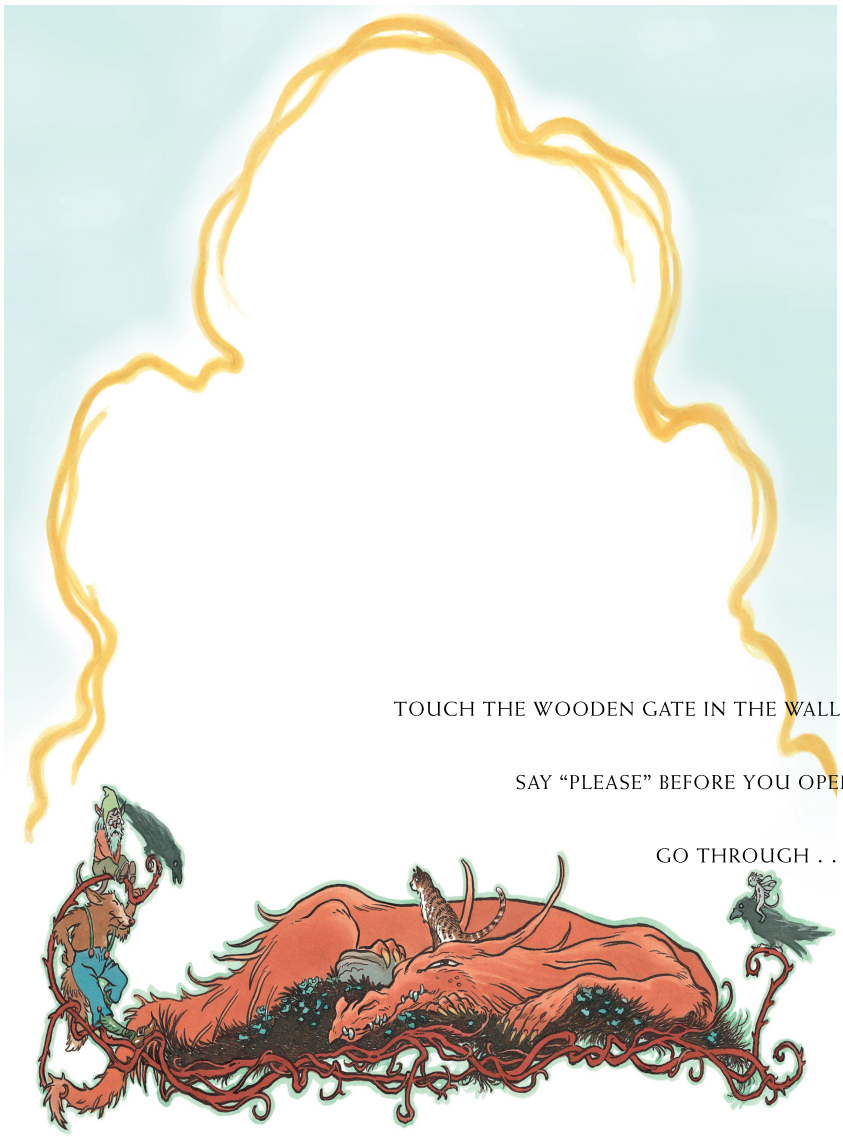
NEIL GAIMAN is the author of many highly acclaimed and award-winning books for children and adults, including the New York Times #1 bestselling and Newbery Medal–winning novel THE GRAVEYARD BOOK, the internationally bestselling CORALINE, and ODD AND THE FROST GIANTS. He is also the author of the picture books BLUEBERRY GIRL, illustrated by Charles Vess, THE WOLVES IN THE WALLS, THE DAY I SWAPPED MY DAD FOR TWO GOLDFISH, and CRAZY HAIR, illustrated by Dave McKean; and THE DANGEROUS ALPHABET, illustrated by Gris Grimly. Originally from England, he now lives in the United States. Visit him online at www.mousecircus.com.

CHARLES VESS's work has graced the pages of numerous publications and has been exhibited internationally. Some of his books include BLUEBERRY GIRL by Neil Gaiman, A CIRCLE OF CATS and SEVEN WILD SISTERS with Charles de Lint, a new edition of PETER PAN, and THE LADIES OF GRACE ADIEU with Susanna Clarke. His awards include a Mythopoeic, Ink Pot, two Chesley, two World Fantasy, and two Eisner awards. Visit him online at www.greenmanpress.com.



TOUCH THE WOODEN GATE IN THE WALL YOU NEVER SAW BEFORE.

SAY “PLEASE” BEFORE YOU OPEN THE LATCH,

GO THROUGH . . .